

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY ATHENS

UNCLAS THESSALONIKI 0156

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TAGS: BEXP, BMEP, GR

SUBJECT: SPECIAL TRADE OPPORTUNITY (STO)

REF: THESSALONIKI 0208 OF 04/05/73

1. CONGEN OFFICER MET FEB 27 WITH NEW
PRESIDENT OF THESSALONIKI PORT ORGANIZATION
DEMETRIOS VALALAS AND DIRECTOR DEMETRIOS PSOINOS TO REVIEW
PRESENT STATUS OF LOCAL PORT EXPANSION PROJECT (REF).
VALALAS STATED THAT EVENTS DURING PAST YEAR HAVE DELAYED
EXPANSION PLANS OUTLINED IN REFTEL. NEW BOARD OF
PORT ORGANIZATION NOW REVIEWING PROJECT AND
WILL PROCEED ON STEP BY STEP BASIS.

2. VALALAS IDENTIFIED FIRST PRIORITY AS OVERALL
DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PORT AREA AND WOULD WELCOME
CONTACTS WITH US FIRM SPECIALIZING IN HARBOR
DEVELOPMENT TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE TECHNICAL
SURVEY. VALALAS DESCRIBED THESSALONIKI AS "MEDIUM SIZED"
PORT NOW PROCESSING 4 MILLION TONS PER YEAR WITH ANNUAL
INCREASE OF 10-15 PER CENT. IN FORMULATING DEVELOPMENT
PLANS, BOARD WILL ALSO WELCOME MATERIAL FROM
US FIRMS ON CONTAINERIZATION AND ALL TYPES OF PORT
AUTOMATION EQUIPMENT. PARTICULARLY USEFUL WOULD
BE MATERIAL RE MINERAL OFF-LOADING EQUIPMENT AND
MACHINERY.

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3. VALALS STATED THAT PORT ORGANIZATION HAS ANNUAL

OPERATING BUDGET OF 23.3 MILLION DOLLARS AND CAPITAL
FUND ABOUT 10 MILLION DOLLARS. VALALAS WOULD ALSO
WELCOME OPPORTUNITY FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION WITH
REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERESTED US CONSULTANT FIRMS TRAVELLING IN
AREA AND SUGGESTED MAY 1975 AS GOOD PERIOD FOR VISITS.

4. COMMENT: NEW PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR ARE QUALIFIED
ENGINEERS AND WILL PROBABLY BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO
CONTACTS THAN PREVIOUS BOARD. WE INFORMED VALALAS OF
PREVIOUS CORRESPONDENCE RE THIS PROJECT WITH
US FIRMS AND PRESIDENT EXPRESSED STRONG INTEREST IN
RENEWED CONTACTS. BELIEVE RECENT AGREEMENT WITH BULGARIA
FOR ANNUAL TRANSIT THROUGH PORT OF 400,000 TONS WILL ALSO
ADD TO INTEREST IN PORT EXPANSION AND MODERNIZATION.
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